DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 470 UD 012 329

AUTHOR	Leeper, Robert R., Ed.
TITLE	Dare to Care/Dare to Act: Racism and Education.
INSTITUTION	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	58p.; Addresses and statements made at the 26th Annual ASCD Conference, St. Louis, Mo., March 6-10, 1971
AVAILABLE FROM	Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (611-17850; $2.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Attitudes; Communication Problems; Conference Reports; *Curriculum Development; *Educational Change; Educational Policy; Ethnic Studies; Learning Processes; Policy Formation; Racial Attitudes; *Racism; Relevance (Education); Role Perception; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This booklet presents the text of the addresses by three speakers at the Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, March 6-10, 1971, in St. Louis, Missouri. The first address, "Dare to Care/Dare to Act" by Price M. Cobbs, M.D., deals with the symptoms, the virulence, and the infectious nature of racism. He emphasizes the essential role played by blacks in the development of modern America, and the necessity for American education to make the changes necessary to cope with the racism prevalent in American society. The second address, "A place to come from," by Uvaldo Palomares proposes a system of communication which he believes extremely effective in bringing people of divergent viewpoints together, so that they at least understand each other and are communicating. Jerome S. Bruner's address, "The process of education reconsidered," discusses the context in which the book was written in 1960, and developments since then. The fourth address, "And they of the middle years," by Fred T. Williams, discusses the most urgent national priorities for action, as seen by its author. John D. Greene reviews his observations and thoughts on the conference in his address, "Impressions." Finally, Alvin D. Loving, Sr. discusses "The Concept of Avoidance" as applied to events concerning the conference speakers. (JM)

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Dare To Care / Dare To Act

Racism and Education

VD 012 520

Addresses and statements by

Jerome S. Bruner
Price M. Cobbs
John D. Greene
Alvin D. Loving, Sr.
Uvaldo H. Palomares
Fred T. Wilhelms

at the 26th Annual ASCD Conference
March 6-10, 1971, St. Louis, Missouri

Edited by **Robert R. Leeper**

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA
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Stock Number: 611-17850

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 74-170135

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Acknowledgments

FINAL editing of the manuscript and publication of this booklet were the responsibility of Robert R. Leeper, Associate Secretary and Editor, ASCD publications. Technical production was handled by Nancy Olson, Lana Pipes, and Barbara Nash, with Mary Albert O'Neill as production manager.

Introduction

"DARE TO CARE / DARE TO ACT" was both the theme and the challenge of the Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, March 6-10, 1971, in St. Louis, Missouri. Those who attended that conference participated richly and fully in its activities.

Pervading the total conference were a sincere desire and an earnest effort to come to grips with one of the major problems of our time—*racism*. That this was the emphasis resulted through the choice and the conviction of the planning group and of the official bodies responsible for the conference. Racism was treated not in a context of coercion or of distortion, but rather as the central focus of a normal ASCD Annual Conference. This most prevalent problem of our time was treated as an integral part of the General Sessions, the Business Meeting, the Action Laboratories, the new and very special "Team Action Laboratories," and many of the Special Sessions.

Attention focused on these questions:

What is the present situation?
What can we as school people do?
What can we as an Association accomplish if we care enough to try to bring about effective change in schools, school systems, and communities?

The results and the workings of the conference itself have been reported elsewhere. This booklet brings you the text of the addresses by three General Session speakers: Price M. Cobbs, M.D., Jerome S. Bruner, and Fred T. Wilhelms. Through an error, no recording was made of the address by Uvaldo Palomares at the Third General Session. We are very fortunate, however, to include a paper by Dr. Palomares especially prepared for this booklet, and

edited by Jim Ballard of the Institute for Personal Effectiveness in Children, San Diego, California.

This booklet also includes brief statements by John D. Greene, ASCD President, 1970-71, and by Alvin D. Loving, Sr., the incoming ASCD President for 1971-72. The texts of these statements made during the final luncheon at the conference seem to place in perspective both the present and the future thrusts of the Association as it attempts to identify, study, and meet the needs, interests, and concerns of its members within a total social setting.

The four papers in this booklet present two emphases relating to the conference theme, "Dare To Care / Dare To Act." The address by Dr. Cobbs and the paper by Dr. Palomares focus directly upon the symptoms, the virulence, and the infectious nature of racism. Dr. Cobbs deals with this topic in terms that are both emphatic and revealing. He emphasizes that we must "strip away the rhetoric and polite conversation, and become more honestly aware of our attitudes and feelings about race."

The presentation by Dr. Palomares is given in a manner that will help each person to achieve considerable insight into his own culture-induced and perhaps unconsciously derived feelings of prejudice and bigotry. Through his personal involvement and sensitive perception, Dr. Palomares helps us to arrive at a feeling that each person must himself, as a result of his new insight, *do* something about these negative and corrosive tendencies.

A second strong element in the ASCD Conference is well illustrated in the addresses by Dr. Bruner and Dr. Wilhelms. This is the need for school people to address themselves to identifying the great gaps and blind spots in the instructional program and to dedicate themselves to the processes of change and improvement.

Dr. Bruner perceptively analyzed the thinking and the climate in society and in education at the time of his 1963 presentation at an earlier ASCD Annual Conference in St. Louis. He openly and graphically portrayed the feeling that was prevalent at the time that rationality alone, when introduced skillfully and pervasively, could redeem both education and society. At this 1971 meeting, however, he testified to the necessity for broadening his earlier approach to education to include more "activation" and more emphasis "on the expressive elements and on the conflicts into which things in the mind are set—the encounters, the hates, the loves, the feelings."

In the closing General Session of the conference Dr. Wilhelms,

with prophetic insight, stated that we in the present generation seem to be at one of the great "swing points" of history. It is up to us to furnish the vision, the perspective, and the know-how that will rally thinking, feeling, and responsible persons for the tough, realistic demands that will be placed upon any individual, or organization, that would "Dare To Care / Dare To Act."

ROBERT R. LEEPER
Associate Secretary and Editor,
ASCD Publications

Dare To Care / Dare To Act

PRICE M. COBBS

I DO not think I would be accused of making an overstatement if I said at the outset that supervision and curriculum development are at the core of the educational process. Small progress will be made in the education of students until progress is made in curriculum development.

For those of you who regularly attend the annual conference of your association, I honestly hope that this 26th Annual Meeting will be a time of reflection and resolve and, more important, that you will leave here dedicated to changing the world in which you live.

I am certain that over the past years many of you have listened to soaring words of eloquence describing the state of our society and its inhabitants. As part of this, I am equally certain that you have heard descriptions of the crisis in education and numerous prescriptions for how you can get about the necessary and vital task of making changes in the field of education.

You have been told that you are of the utmost importance in changing the dangerous drifts in our society. If our children are to learn, if they are to receive the necessary tools to live in this society and world in peace and mutual self-respect, then I do not think I am guilty of flattery if I say that you in this audience are among the primary architects of that awesome and heretofore unfinished task.

Yet, just as I say this my intellect tells me that you have heard it all before. At previous meetings like this one, many of you have nodded your heads in agreement with the speaker, and silently you have uttered "right on" or its historic equivalent. You have sometimes taken notes or attended a stimulating workshop, and no

doubt you have vowed to do something—constructive and positive—when you returned home and went back to work.

And yet, with all this resolve and agreement by people who are important to the process of change, our problems, and particularly the problems of educating the young, have continued to multiply.

All too often most of you have gone home from previous conferences and then waited for your national leaders or, perhaps, an official bulletin to goad you back to the action-ready state which you felt at the meeting. You may have blamed your organization for a lack of leadership, and you may have been right. You have, most of the time, silently blamed your principals, department heads, superintendents, and boards of education for their inactivity and blocking of your efforts. In all of these accusations you have undoubtedly been correct in assessing part of the blame, except for one vital missing ingredient.

You have exempted yourselves from any blame.

The Malignant Problem of Racism

You in this audience are like most Americans and despite our vaunted claims of being go-getters, despite our much heralded technological advances, most of you leave it to someone else to solve the festering and malignant problem of racism in America.

You do not consider yourselves bigoted—if anything, quite the opposite. It is just that your defense mechanisms are identical to those of the bigot, and both of you expect someone else to make nagging social problems go away.

It is for this reason and several more that I choose to speak tonight and ask you to think personally about the theme of your Conference—"Dare To Care / Dare To Act."

As a psychiatrist, I am reminded daily that change of whatever sort does not occur until an individual person changes. Very immediately, when thinking of one person, I am reminded of the dramatic personal growth and change in our black giant—Malcolm X—and how those changes have served to catalyze an entire people in beginning to make change.

So, however much anyone might wish otherwise, if any of you are to leave this conference and behave differently from previous years, it is *you* who must undergo that, at times, painful process of personal growth and subsequent social action.

Let us look at what faces this country as we open this 26th Annual Conference.

Black people, Chicanos and other Spanish-speaking Americans, native American Indians, a growing number of the white young, women in increasing number—all are feeling the weight of oppression within this system of government. In varying degrees these people are oppressed, and there is a growing awareness of this fact.

They are, in ever-mounting numbers and in a variety of ways, shouting about it and attempting to do something about it. They are alienated, estranged, and cut off from what we might call the American mainstream.

And, of all the institutions of America, the one from which they feel most estrangement—and, hence, toward which they feel the most anger—is the educational system. If you are serious about daring to care and daring to act, then you must ponder that fact.

We are seeing people—over and under thirty—who consider their school experience at best meaningless, and at worst worthless. Whether this is true as an objective fact is not the question; the fact remains that this is the way they perceive their educational experience.

Day after day Bill Grier and I are once again reminded that the schools of this nation are the most readily identified objects of black rage.[1] They are immediate, they are ubiquitous, and, all too often, they do much to justify such hostility. Too many people, and especially black and brown people, have a feeling deep in their guts that they have been educated or miseducated for a society that, for them, does not exist.

I talk to people who compare schools to prisons—and they have had experience in both. Both are "learning" institutions supported by society. Both are concerned with maintaining law and order. Both too frequently expect all who enter to be joyless and to fit into a predetermined niche. And both serve as breeding grounds for hostility, aggression, and violence in our society.

If you think the comparison is a harsh one, I would ask each of you to ponder and examine the word "racism." What does it mean to you? Think of it in relationship to your individual school, to your school system or teachers college. Think of where you live, to what clubs you belong. Think of your families and friends.

[1] William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs. *Black Rage*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1968. 213 pp.

When the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, more commonly known as the Kerner Commission, issued its conclusions that white racism was a root cause of so much of our so-called urban riots, many white Americans professed to be shocked. Many people professed to be thrown by the accusation and further stated that they were unable to understand the word. They refused to examine their own attitudes and actions which might convey feelings of white superiority over black; and further, they refused to examine institutional structures which, by their very nature, subordinate individuals of color and those who are thought to be different.

And it is in changing the racist nature of our society that America has come unglued. It is this sickness which has us spying on everyone who mouths something to the left of J. Edgar Hoover. It is this sickness which has us continuing to fight in Vietnam while supposedly mature men in high positions talk about winning and losing and game plans, and use the jargon of junior high school boys on a playground. It is this sickness which must first be finally done with before other problems can be solved.

America is a powerful nation, with a sophisticated technology, gigantic corporations, and staggering wealth.

Standing thus at the height of its powers, its details etched clear, it is on public view. That vicious strain of racial hatred which might have been excused in a rapidly growing youth looks ugly and ominous in a mature giant.

America has come to the place of Rome in the 4th century—arrogant, vulnerable, and possibly on the verge of a mulish, obstinate death.

Like Rome, America has had a failure of leadership as the gap has widened between haves and have-nots. Then, as now, there was endless war and a corrupt bureaucracy. Then, as *now*, terrorism and repression reached excesses previously unknown.

In the end, the Roman Empire became a military aristocracy which spoke and acted independently of the people and which thrust aside the ancient ideals. And, as we view the consequences of American racism; as we view our inability to eradicate poverty; as we take note of a society which has now embarked on a course suicidal to any culture, namely that course of warring on its young; as we wait endlessly for a wrenching, senseless war in Southeast Asia to grind to a halt, we must reach the conclusion that, whatever our veneer of affluence and civilization, too few Americans really dare to care.

The Flaw in the System

John Dewey told us several decades ago that education has a creative function to play in the shaping of individuals and, through them, in the shaping of a culture. These were and are prophetic words, but unfortunately too few educators have the courage to take them fully into account.

Over 50 years ago W. E. B. DuBois described our society and the historic flaws of its educational system, and most of what he found wrong has yet to be corrected.

Our society and our educational institutions specifically seem determined to demonstrate that they can respond to every problem save the malignancy of racism in America.

At the time of greatest immigration to these shores, American educational institutions responded. Curriculum was changed to meet the challenge. Schools were turned inside out in cities of high foreign population in an effort to Americanize these new arrivals and make them available to the work force.

More recently, after the challenge of the first Soviet space vehicle, American education responded frantically to catch up. Once again, a national cry went out to add new classes, derive new methods of teaching, and meet this national emergency.

And now, with ecology as the newest social fad, we see once again the responsiveness of the educational system to everything but finding a cure to the malignancy of racial hatred.

For, in matters of race, too few educators and too few Americans dare to care.

There are those of you attending the 26th Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development who undoubtedly have told yourselves you are tired of hearing about the racial problems. Many white people, middle Americans you are called, have had enough of this talk; and besides, blacks have the same chance as everyone else if only they would use it and stop just demanding things.

In your deliberations at this conference, you can discuss open curricula, you can learn new methods of affective teaching, you can see in a workshop the latest methods in teacher education, in curriculum development, but one fact remains. One flaw in the American national character remains exposed and will not go away.

You are talking about educating Americans for an American

and for a world society, and yet I must remind you again of one historical fact.

Crucial to All Definitions of America

We blacks remain crucial to all definitions of America.

In education, and specifically in the area of curriculum, I repeat, *we blacks remain crucial to all definitions of America.* This historical fact has been forgotten, ignored, and denied, but it is an essential truth. And it is our continuing tragedy that, by not taking this into account in curriculum development up to the present, the schools have done such an outstanding job of intellectually wiping out black children. While some of our avant-garde friends tell us that education must be shaped to save the ecology, the facts continue to shock us.

In standardized tests of verbal and nonverbal skill, reading comprehension, arithmetic skill, and general information, black first graders score below 85 percent of white first graders. And this disparity continues and increases throughout elementary and secondary school.

The hostility of white institutions and American society continues to kill off the learning and aspiration of black and brown and red kids.

Teaching continues in that curious vacuum which constantly asks the question, "Why doesn't Johnny read?" rather than, "Why doesn't the teacher teach?"

Counseling and guidance continue to take place in the absence of any serious and scholarly pursuit which would enable the counselor to know about and respect the different and unique experience of the student.

Sterile curricula continue to cause our children to see school as not relevant to their lives. As a consequence, they become shunted even more into menial jobs and blind-alley studies, and their potential is never realized.

For those of you who cannot identify with those who are different, I would remind you that the inability to change curricula radically to meet the total needs of contemporary society is increasingly having an equally deleterious effect on many white youngsters. An alarming number of white students at all levels of the educational system feel that this society is hypocritical, sterile, and not worthy of being joined. They have a dilemma which approaches the complexity of a Gordian knot. They can either come out of

the end of the educational tunnel emotionally barren, intellectually stifled, and bearing the racist legacy of their forefathers, or they want to bludgeon their minds with drugs in near-total and self-destructive rebellion.

The hour is indeed late for this country, and I agree with John Goodlad, who in his book, *School, Curriculum, and the Individual,*[2] pleads with educators not to squander their time teaching trivia. Those who dare to care *must* dare to act. The rational man not only is committed to the rich fruits of inquiry but also is prepared to act and, indeed, to act upon insight rendered compelling by commitment.

Passivity must end if you in this audience believe that education is an instrument for transforming the culture. We no longer can afford the luxury of conference-room radicals who take no action.

If you dare to act you must enter your Action Labs resolved to strip away the rhetoric and polite conversation and become more honestly aware of your attitudes and feelings about race. You must recognize the hopes and aspirations of all oppressed Americans and make them *your* hopes and aspirations.

This conference, if it is to be successful, must help all of you become activists and advocates for changes in curriculum which allow *all* children to see their self-images reflected in the schools they attend. In my view, only by having advocacy curricula can we even begin to start the process of helping our children develop a positive self-esteem, so that they can acquire the tools necessary for this society.

For centuries it has been the pigmented minorities of this country who have been asked to change. Now it is the white majority which must make the transformations. You must, as James Macdonald has so passionately written, make a professional commitment for action if you are to participate in helping America avoid a holocaust.

It is a bestial system of cruelty out of antiquity that blacks are determined to reform, and we seek the aid of every true patriot. For centuries we have been asked to change and now black people can change no further. It is white people who must change. They must dare to act.

Black Americans are now responding to their moment in his-

[2] John I. Goodlad. *School, Curriculum, and the Individual.* Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1966. 259 pp.

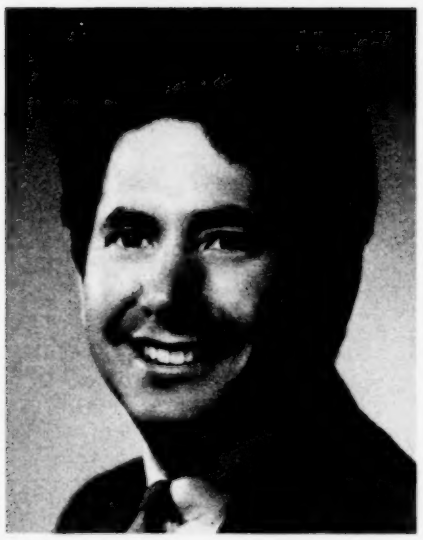
tory and can no more be stopped than a rushing river. We have been bred with words of freedom, but immersed in bigotry and oppression. We who have been scorned are now fighting our battles, and they are not in Vietnam but in the schools of America.

For those of you who have the courage to act, we will summon the courage to embrace you as brothers and sisters.

We rise now, unafraid, with a new morality, a new religion, willing to die for principles we hold dearer than life. We have suffered hideous mistreatment and are determined that neither we nor anyone else is to suffer anything like it in America ever again.

The serenity of our confidence grows out of two elements. We are weaponed finally with fearlessness and we know there is no deadlier foe than man without fear of suffering or death.

Those who were once the lowliest are now the noblest and say that for America to fulfill a sanguine expectation of democracy, it must travel the path of the oppressed and frame for itself a new definition.



UVALDO PALOMARES, President, Institute for Personal Effectiveness in Children, San Diego, California

Edited by Jim Ballard

A Place To Come From

UVALDO PALOMARES

I HAVE several goals today, but my key purpose is to discuss a system of communication. This system is, in my mind, extremely effective in bringing people of divergent viewpoints together so that they at least understand each other and *are* communicating. I believe that this system I am about to cover *is* effective, but at the same time I think there are very few of us now trying this approach. It is not that we could not be good at it—we could become extremely good at it. Nevertheless, through tradition we are locked into other systems and approaches, many of which really keep us from communicating effectively.

Let me start by saying a word about where I think we are. It is my feeling that we have become experts at dealing with communication through data belonging to people. By data, I mean the content of what they say. We are so good at dealing with data that we have begun to prize the "data skills" that people have developed, and to reward such skills. We have debating teams. We are impressed by people who can give obtuse answers to interviewers for the media. We have seen a proliferation of talk shows, of commentator shows. And in all of this—this emphasis on dealing with the data—we think we are communicating, or learning to do so. We think, as we watch the talk-show people, as we hear interviews with politicians who never seem afraid to cut through the questions of the interviewers, we think: If only I could be effective that way.

Well, let me propose to you that to every piece of data a person gives you, there is attached a feeling, or group of feelings. I am using the word "feelings" broadly; the definition includes not only emotions and visceral kinds of reactions, but attitudes as well—the

inner experience of the sender of the data, if you will. I am saying, then, that the data do not proceed out of an emotional vacuum, but come to you, perhaps, plastered with feelings. What I would like to do is to convince you that people can become far better communicators, far more effective in their dealings with other people—and that many of our current problems between people and groups of people can be at least alleviated if not eventually solved—if they could somehow communicate to another person the idea: "I hear your feelings. Your feelings are real, and perfectly legitimate. I may not agree with your data, but your feelings are a big piece of your reality right now, and I accept that reality."

Feelings Are Real

To make all of this more concrete, let me give you three examples that are perhaps typical of what goes on today between people.

Example Number 1: Imagine that you are a teacher, and one day while you are correcting papers in your room during recess a little boy, call him Teddy, runs in. Now, it is obvious to you right away that he is very distressed. He is crying and gulping, and trying to speak to you through all of this agitation. He says, between gulps, "He—he hit me!" And right away, in your mind, you get ready to say—what? *"What happened?"*

Now, all of a sudden, Teddy's got to fill you in on *data.* The big thing motivating him when he ran in was his own terror, his own inner feelings. And you, with your question, switched him onto the data track. My question is: what does this do inside Teddy? Well, let's go on.

Teddy says, "Jimmy hit me."

Oh-oh, here it comes: dissonance in the data. You know that Jimmy is just a little shy guy, a head shorter than Teddy, and that he never hits. So now you've got to deal with the dissonance—the difference between what you know from history, and what you just heard. So you respond out of this dissonance. You smile. You do it kindly.

"Oh, now, Teddy. You know Jimmy's smaller than you, and he doesn't hit. Now, tell me what really happened. It's all right."

Now Teddy must protect his feelings. And he's got some new ones that he didn't even have when he ran in.

"He—he had a stick!"

You don't say anything for a minute, but your face shows

Teddy where his new data went. You know Jimmy would never use a stick on anyone. And you're wrestling with this now, with what to do. . . .

Example Number 2: A teen-age daughter is having a talk with her father. This girl is very much with it; she is ironing her hair now, wearing sandals, the whole thing. And recently there has been an instance in which she has not taken care of the family car.

The father is speaking. "But honey, you don't understand. You have it so easy these days that putting a dent in the car doesn't seem to make any difference to you. I grew up in the depression. I had to work hard. For you, everything comes easy."

And the daughter, listening to all this, responds to—what?

"Oh, come on now, daddy. It *is* different now. People *have* jobs; *I* have a job. It just isn't the depression any more!"

The daughter, you see, responds to the data—to the verbal content part of the message. So the father must now deal with that, too. He forgets that it was not his own family, but a family that lived across the tracks, that had the experience he now describes:

"Look, I'm not getting through to you. You gotta understand what it was like. We went hungry. One time we had nothing—nothing to eat for four days!" And so on. . . .

Example Number 3: This one happened to me personally. I recently was a speaker at a conference of educators, where I was speaking on the bicultural experience of Chicanos. At one point I was trying to make a point by using an example from my early high school years. I said that I had tried to date a white girl one time, and she had said that she couldn't go out with me because I was a Mexican. I described the feelings I experienced at the time—a terrible sense of despair, a feeling of sickness, dirtiness. In other words, there on the platform I was struggling to express my feelings.

After the talk the audience broke down into small discussion groups, and I became a member of one of them. In the group, a man asked me something like this:

"Valo, how many *gringa* girls did you ask out?"

I remember that all of a sudden I felt trapped and scared. I said, "A lot of them."

"Well," he said, "when you asked them, was it different than when you asked Mexican girls to go out with you?"

My feeling got worse. I felt that he was questioning my facts, the things I had said in my talk earlier. I felt he was going after

me. I remember desperately trying to get together facts to support what I had said on the platform.

Now, in this third example I would like to include something that then ensued in the group, which helps make the point I am after. In that group there was also the wife of one of the conference presenters, and she did something next which I think was very significant. I know that it was significant for me at the time.

She said, "Valo, when you were up there telling about how it made you feel in high school when that white girl turned you down, I could *feel* your anger, your sense of helplessness." Now, notice that she did not say that she agreed with me that I *should* have felt that way.

That minute, when this woman said all that, I felt a huge weight come off my shoulders.

Let us take another look at those other two examples. What would have happened if the daughter in the second example had first of all tried to deal with her father's feelings? What if she had said this:

"Gee, daddy, when you talk about the depression and all that, I get a feeling from you that things really were hard then. I guess I don't really understand it, but I wonder about it. And I can see that it must really have been hard, and painful." Notice that the girl does not say, "I agree with you, with your data." She does not say that she agrees with anything, much less the relevance of his bringing up the depression when she has smashed up the car. She is just saying that she understands that he has strong feelings, and that those feelings are real. She legitimizes them, apart entirely from the data.

I can imagine that if she were to respond to the feelings this way, the father might really get in touch with his facts much better. Because he would be *free* to. He would not have to defend them.

And in the first instance, if that teacher could somehow have caught herself before she asked about what happened, if she could have, temporarily, purposely kept herself from dealing with the data the kid was giving, and gone along with his feelings, I wonder what would have happened, inside the kid.

Maybe she could have said, "You are really upset. I can see you're hurting." Something conveying the idea that I can *feel with* you. *Your feelings are your reality.*

Perhaps then Teddy could really have gotten his data straight, and told the teacher that he and Jimmy had been going down

some steps, and Jimmy had been carrying a broom to the janitor, and that the broom had caught against something, and tripped them both. And Teddy had hurt his knee.

Constructive Human Interaction

What I am saying is that in communications, especially in ones that have the seeds of some kind of issue or confrontation in them, I might never be able to deal with my data unless you legitimize my inner experience—the important part of my message that is coming to you between the lines of what I am saying. Maybe the message will never be clear unless you do that, unless you somehow legitimize my reality. In current hip language, this would equal my "place." People call this "where I'm coming from." Until you hear where I'm coming from, understand my place, our interactive process is going to be garbled. We're going to miss each other.

As I said, we are experts at dealing with the data, but we have no systematic ability to respond to the feelings. But I think we can get much better at this. As educators, we could spend a lot of time on *us*—things we do to children, how we cut off a child's right to his feelings, how we expect perfection from kids. How we debate them, the little ones who are just learning how to talk about the world and who are just learning how to get in touch with their own feelings, and thus are at a loss.

We could ask the question: Why does all this bother us so much? Why are the teacher-child, father-daughter, racial confrontation issues so common? Why, for instance, is it all right to see a black happy ("You see? They're happy people. They tap-dance a lot."), but jarring and uncomfortable to see a black angry and demanding?

In America, we have a dream. We sell ourselves and the rest of the world on our dream. And the dream is: Americans *don't* discriminate. It is an American value, the idea that all are equal and are treated equally. And it is a good value; no one is challenging that. But the thing that we do not face squarely is that we do it, we *do discriminate*, every minute of the day. I do it, you do it, we do it. We do it in subtle ways that are lost even on ourselves. And that is why we question the hell out of the *logic* of minority-group demands and behavior today. If the logic revolves around blackness or Chicano-ness or Indian-ness, we feel there must be other reasons than that. Because the dream tells us so: there are not those kinds of facts, discriminatory data, in this country.

And so we look for explanations in other realms. The answer must lie in giving more money, in better jobs, better housing, better schools. We go in those directions, and I am not saying we should not. But what I am saying is that the *feelings* of these people may be based purely on color, just as they are trying to say! I mean, the color—the blackness, the brownness—is right there; it is flagrant. But the feeling of a black or Chicano is that people want to devise other directions to go than the obvious one. The point is: as in those three examples I gave, if people won't accept the place you are coming from you have to resort to another—to other data—to defend yourself.

I know that as a Chicano I am not able to deal effectively with people until I feel that they accept *my right to perceive my reasons for feeling the way I do* as valid. When they do so, it does not tell me anything about whether they agree with me. They may totally disagree with me. But their validation of my right to feel as I do goes a long way toward getting us on similar wavelengths—toward putting us in a position to deal mutually and constructively with the pertinent data. And it is not a one-way street. I must validate their right, also. If I am operating out of the part of me that is my Chicano-ness, I have to be ready to find ways to "hear" their Anglo-ness, perhaps to hear their feelings of fear at my threatening the dream.

But the sad fact is that most people want to put a different place on you to come from than your ethnicity. Any place is okay, except that one! And as I perceive it, they refuse to accept that place because for you to come from it threatens their own Americanhood, threatens their being Christian, threatens their belief in democracy, touches some part of their value system that is inviolable. And when that happens to me, to us, it escalates to a place where I find it extremely difficult to distinguish *when the issue is ethnicity and when it is other things,* like a background of poverty, or being a psychologist, or what have you.

We, the minority persons, are so scarred-up from our constant inability to legitimize ourselves that we feel now that our very existence, our peculiar body movements, talk of something that is wrong to Anglos. Therefore, the Anglo is left to protect himself by questioning *any* data we throw out to explain our reason for being.

And the result of this is that we become experts at explaining to Anglos, in any confused, defensive way that fits the Anglo pattern, our reason for being. The Chicano version of Uncle Tom says, "I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps," as he is trying to

explain himself within the narrow framework the Anglo world has provided us. He is dealing with stereotypes, not realities. In other words, the Anglo world sets the parameters, and we learn to respond, to build whole worlds of explanation, within those narrow confines.

It is only lately that some have not only widened those parameters but crashed right through them and built systems of explanation that lie entirely outside those Anglo-provided parameters. And what this means is that I am not going to apologize any more. I am no longer going to agree that it is that Chicanos are simply deprived of information, of intellectual and moral stimulation—that it is an issue of delay of gratification, and all that. No. I have gotten very good, myself, at playing the victim, and yet that is not where it really is.

I am going to say that this whole issue, as with all the issues that exist between people today, is *our* problem. It is not just mine; it is yours, too. It is the problem, the same one, that exists between you and your child, between you and your husband or wife, between you and your employer—that is creating the problems you have with me.

No, the problem, the real issue in our misunderstanding of one another, is this: If you had listened to my feelings, you would understand my data much better. And if I had listened to your feelings, I would understand yours.

The man who said: "I don't agree with what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it," said a mouthful about constructive human interaction. But I would add to that. I would say that the motto for today—between racial and ethnic groups, between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between teachers and children—should be this:

"I don't agree with what you say, but I will defend your right to the feelings and attitudes and the whole inner experience that constitute the present reality out of which you say it; and I will defend that reality, and your right to it, against my own too-willing and too-eager ability to deal with the content of what you say—even to easily shoot it down."

For I can sense, if I try, what you are experiencing, and I can communicate that feeling-with to you. You can, if you try, feel with me also, and let me know. Once we make these efforts, we are on the same human road together—even if, even though, we have different, divergent, or opposite information to convey.

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The Process of Education Reconsidered

JEROME S. BRUNER

TEN years have passed since *The Process of Education*[1] was published—a decade of enormous change in the perspective and emphasis of educational reform. I am torn between beginning my account as an archaeologist reconstructing that period by its products, or beginning with a message of revolutionary import. I shall moderate both impulses and begin with a bit of archaeology and show how my excavations lead me to a certain revolutionary zeal.

Prologue on the Past

Let me reconstruct the period in which *The Process of Education* came into being. The year 1959 was a time of great concern over the intellectual aimlessness of our schools. Great strides had been made in many fields of knowledge, and these advances were not being reflected in what was taught in our schools. A huge gap had grown between what might be called the head and the tail of the academic procession. There was great fear, particularly that we were not producing enough scientists and engineers.

It was the period, you will recall, shortly after Sputnik. The great problem faced by some of my colleagues in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the time was that modern physics and mathematics were not represented in the curriculum, yet many of the decisions that society had to make were premised on being able to understand

[1] Jerome S. Bruner. *The Process of Education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960. 97 pp.

modern science. Something had to be done to assure that the ordinary decision maker within the society would have a sound basis for decision. The task was to get started on the teaching of science and, later, other subjects. They were innocent days; but beware such judgments rendered in retrospect. At worst, the early period suffered an excess of rationalism.

The prevailing notion was that if you understood the structure of knowledge, that understanding would then permit you to go ahead on your own; you did not need to encounter everything in nature in order to know nature, but by understanding some deep principles, you could extrapolate to the particulars as needed. Knowing was a canny strategy whereby you could know a great deal about a lot of things while keeping very little in mind.

This view essentially opened the possibility that those who understood a field well—the practitioners of the field—could work with teachers to produce new curricula. For the first time in the modern age, the acme of scholarship, even in our great research institutes and universities, was to convert knowledge into pedagogy, to turn it back to aid the learning of the young. It was a brave idea and a noble one, for all its pitfalls. It is an idea that still bears close scrutiny, and we shall give it some later.

It was this point of view that emerged from the famous Woods Hole conference on improving education in science (the impetus and inspiration for *The Process of Education*). No curriculum project in the first five years after that was worth its salt unless it could sport a Nobel laureate or two on its letterhead!

The rational structuralism of Woods Hole had its internal counterpoise in intuitionism—the espousal of good guessing, of courage to make leaps, to go a long way on a little. It was mind at its best, being active, extrapolative, innovative, going from something firmly held to areas which were not so firmly known in order to have a basis for test.

Of course, everybody knew that good teachers always have encouraged such use of mind. But perhaps good teachers were being driven underground by the prevailing literalism. It is hard not to wonder, reading Plato's *Meno*, how it is that the naïve slave boy in the famous dialogue with Socrates turns out to be so enormously expert in geometry. Is it a put-on by Plato—to tease people into recognizing how far a learner can go if you provide the right opportunity to make guesses, if you structure the information for him to enable him to take off on his own? It is a wedding of rationalism and intuition, arranged by a canny teacher.

At Woods Hole and after there was also a great emphasis on active learning, poking into things yourself, an emphasis on active discovery rather than upon the passive consumption of knowledge. It too derived from the idea that making things one's own was an activity that would get things structured in one's own way rather than as in the book. Some enthusiasts ran away with the idea of the "discovery method," declaring that one should even discover the names of the constellations! It is a modest idea, but with profound consequences, some of which were not understood at the time—and we shall come back to it.

During the early sixties, in various projects, it was discovered again and again how difficult it was to get to the limit of children's competence when the teaching was good. It was Socrates and the slave boy constantly being replayed. No wonder then that we concluded that any subject could be taught in some honest form to any child at any stage in his development. This did not necessarily mean that it could be taught in its final form, but it did mean that basically there was a courteous translation that could reduce ideas to a form that young students could grasp. *Not* to provide such translation was discourteous to them. The pursuit of this ideal was probably the most important outcome of the great period of curriculum building in the sixties.

With all of this there went a spirit and attitude toward students. The learner was not one kind of person, the scientist or historian another kind. The schoolboy learning physics did so as a physicist rather than as a consumer of some facts wrapped in what came to be called at Woods Hole a "middle language." A middle language talks *about* the subject rather than talking the subject.

I remember hearing the following joke at the time, which illustrates how we wanted learners to approach a subject like physics—with humor, with gaiety, with abandon, taking the thing apart, putting it back together again.

> A student at the University of Chicago was taking an examination in introductory physics. There is a question which reads, "You have a barometer. Your task is to find the height of such and such a building in central Chicago. How do you proceed?"
>
> The student answers, "There are several ways of proceeding. One is to go to the top of the building, station a confederate below, hold the barometer over the edge with your handkerchief poised to signal and, as you drop the barometer, wave your handkerchief. Your confederate starts a stop watch at the signal, timing the fall of the barometer until it hits the ground. By the use of a simple correction for the friction of the

atmosphere, the height of the building is easily figured by the duration of the fall.

"Unfortunately, this method requires destruction of the barometer and thus precludes a test of reliability. Therefore, a second method may be tried, although it is a bit more strenuous. Measure the length of the barometer, then lay it end over end over end as you ascend the stairway of the building to be measured. Then multiply the length of the barometer by the number of rotations of the barometer.

"Still another technique is available. Station a man of known height on top of the building, holding the barometer up at arm's length. Station a confederate true north of the building. Wait for Local Apparent Noon and determine the extreme limit of the shadow of the barometer to the nearest centimeter and the Zone Time for Local Apparent Noon that day. Determine the day of the year and the latitude of the building. Consult a nautical almanac for sun's elevation at Local Apparent Noon at that latitude. Assuming the building stands upright, you now have two angles and the length between them and the rest is simple geometry.

"While this is highly accurate, it may take somewhat longer than you have time for. It is suggested that the following procedure be used by those with limited time. Take the barometer to the building. Proceed to the basement where you will find a door marked 'Superintendent.' Push the doorbell. It will be answered by the superintendent. Say to him, 'I have a barometer here that is worth $12.75. I will give it to you if you will tell me the height of this building.' "

That is good science! It also embodies a proper respect for students. It was our hope that we could produce students like this—capable of intuition, wit, and lighthearted seriousness. Not a bad ideal.

I recall a dark day on Cape Cod, the day after the Woods Hole conference ended. It was raining. We, the Steering Committee, thought surely the whole enterprise had been wrongly conceived. We would end, we feared, by turning the Educational Establishment against us and science. Then *The Process of Education* was published. It was acclaimed. Acclaim is very hard to cope with if you have business in mind; for once something is acclaimed it can be ignored in a noble way. The acclaim from which we suffered was that each reader-teacher picked the part he liked best and proclaimed it was exactly what *he* was doing! But the period of being acclaimed into impotence passed as soon as new curricula began to appear.

Producing curriculum turned out to be not quite as we academics had thought! Something a bit strained would happen when one caused to work together a most gifted and experienced teacher

and an equally gifted and experienced scientist, historian, or scholar. There was much to be learned on both sides and the process was slow and decisions had to be made about the level at which one wanted to pitch the effort—the college-bound, the "average," the slum kid?

There were aspects of the undertaking that we had not counted on—mostly after the production. One was the problem of bureaucracy in education, the subject of an entire yearbook recently published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [2]—the issue of adoption, of distribution of materials, and so forth. A second was an even deeper problem: the training of teachers to use curricula. Both of these problems remain unresolved —the first constrained by fiscal difficulties, the second by the genuinely puzzling questions of teacher recruitment, training, and supervision. I cannot pretend to competence in these areas.

Let me insert here a few words about the political uses to which *The Process of Education* has been put. The book has been translated into 21 languages. The first language into which it was translated was Russian, and I gather from Russian friends that it is a very good translation indeed and that it has had a large sale. Why did the Russians take the trouble? It soon became clear that they had a very good if surprising reason. This was the period of crucial debate between the Stalinists on the one side and the new reformers under Khrushchev on the other. The reformers were urging that it was not enough to present socialist realism. To interest the learner, one had to lead him to discover it in his own way. Moreover, the guarantee against dogmatism was intuition. Finally, the Russians were themselves rejecting easy ideas about readiness and they welcomed allies. They had discovered earlier that readiness was a product of middle class upbringing.

In Italy, ironically, the book was being used in a battle by the moderate Left, against doctrinaire Marxist educators on the one side and against traditionalists on the other who wanted to maintain a classical curriculum. Since school reform is close to the heart of Italian political debate, the Italian translation is very much treated as a political as well as pedagogical tract.

In Japan there is a distinction between the "wet" and the "dry." "Wet" refers to the traditionally Japanese; "dry" to Westernizing. The Japanese translation was used by adherents of the "dry" group

[2] Vernon F. Haubrich, editor. *Freedom, Bureaucracy, & Schooling.* 1971 Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971. 293 pp.

to make the point that Western education did not simply mean the teaching of utilitarian subjects, that it also respected mind and intuition, that there were structures worthy of mastery whether by a "wet" or "dry" mind. The sale in Japan was enormous.

The Process of Education is available in Hebrew and in Arabic. When I asked Israelis why they had translated it they said, "Because it works." My Roumanian translator said the book was very much in the spirit of contemporary intellectual trends there. I shall be interested to know whether Husak's government has suppressed the translations into Czech and Slovak. And I am bemused that there is no French translation! What an extraordinary venture a book of this sort is. If I had ever doubted that education is a crucial arm of ideology, I would have been well taught by the foreign editions.

Present and Future

So much for the archaeology. What I should like to do now is shift to other matters more concerned with present and future.

The movement of which *The Process of Education* was a part was based on a formula of faith: that learning was what students wanted to do, that they wanted to achieve an expertise in some particular subject matter. Their motivation was taken for granted. It also accepted the tacit assumption that everybody who came to these curricula in the schools already had been the beneficiary of the middle class hidden curricula that taught them analytic skills and launched them in the traditionally intellectual use of mind.

Failure to question these assumptions has, of course, caused much grief to all of us. Let me quote from the preface of a book I have just written, *The Relevance of Education*:

> This book is built around essays written between 1964 and 1970, years of deep and tumultuous change. They were disturbing years. They had an impact in their own right, amplified by my increasingly strong involvement during the period with very young human beings. These were my "subjects" in experiments and observations. The contrast between the exterior social turbulence and the human helplessness I was studying kept imposing itself.
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> The period of these essays is the period of the elaboration of youth culture, with its concomitant revolt against "establishment" schooling. It extends from Berkeley to Columbia, through the Harvard bust and the Sorbonne riots, to the Prague spring and summer, and the beginnings of the long and cruel winter that followed. In our own universities, we

have gone from the salad days of "new colleges" to the present "hard line" of so many faculties. The young began the period in political activism; then there was the sharp fire of a new extremism; now, in the early winter of 1971, it is a new disengagement.

Through the turmoil and idealism of these years has run a theme of "naturalness," of "spontaneity," of the immediacy of learning through direct encounter. A distrust of traditional ways has brought into question whether schools as such might not be part of the problem—rather than a solution to the problem of education. American educational reform in the early '60s was concerned principally with the reconstruction of curriculum. The ideal was clarity and self-direction of intellect in the use of modern knowledge.

There were brave efforts and successful ones in mathematics and physics, in chemistry and biology, and even in the behavioral sciences. The faltering of the humanists at this time was puzzling, though it later became clearer. A revision of the humanities involved too many explosive issues.

In the second half of the decade, the period of these essays, deeper doubts began to develop. Did revision of curriculum suffice, or was a more fundamental restructuring of the entire educational system in order? Plainly, the origins of the doubt go deep and far back into the changing culture and technology of our times. But our ruinous and cruel war in Vietnam led many who would have remained complacent to question our practices and priorities. How could a society be so enormously wealthy, yet so enormously and callously destructive, while professing idealism? How wage a war in the name of a generous way of life, while our own way of life included urban ghettos, a culture of poverty and racism.

We looked afresh at the appalling effects of poverty and racism on the lives of children, and the extent to which schools had become instruments of the evil forces in our society. Eloquent books like Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* [3] began to appear.

It was the black community that first sought "free schools," freedom schools. They were to help black identity, to give a sense of control back to the community. Just as the civil rights movement provided models for social protest at large, so, too, the drive for free schools for the children of the black poor produced a counterpart response in the intellectual, middle-class community. The revolt against the system very quickly came to include the educational establishment. Generous-minded men like Ivan Illich and Paul Goodman, inveighing against the deadening bureaucratic hold of teachers and educational administrators, voiced a new romanticism: salvation by spontaneity, disestablish the established

[3] Jonathan Kozol. *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools.* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967. 240 pp.

schools. It was a view that, as we know, took immediate root in the "in" youth culture.

But if romanticism was solace for some, despair was the order for others. By the spring of 1970, when Elizabeth Hall, one of the editors of *Psychology Today*, asked me what I thought about American education at the moment, all I could answer was that it had passed into a state of crisis. It had failed to respond to changing social needs, lagging behind rather than leading. My work on early education and social class, for example, had convinced me that the educational system was, in effect, our way of maintaining a class system—a group at the bottom. It crippled the capacity of children in the lowest socioeconomic quarter of the population to participate at full power in the society, and it did so early and effectively.

It is not surprising then that this little volume, arranged roughly in chronological order, should begin with an essay that bears the title, "The Perfectibility of Intellect," vintage 1965, and end with one called "Poverty and Childhood," a product of 1970.[4]

And so a half-decade passed. By 1970 the concern was no longer to change schools from within by curriculum, but to refit them altogether to the needs of society, to change them as institutions. It is no longer reform but revolution that has come to challenge us. And it is not so plain what is the role of the academic in such an enterprise.

To Activate the Learner

What would one do now? What would be the pattern at a Woods Hole conference in 1971? It would not be in Woods Hole, in that once rural, coastal setting. More likely, we would gather in the heart of a great city. The task would center around the dispossession of the children of the poor and the alienation of the middle class child. In some crucial respect, the medium would surely be the message: the school, not the curriculum, or the society and not even the school. And in my view, through my perspective, the issues would have to do with how one gives back initiative and a sense of potency, how one activates to tempt one to want to learn again. When that is accomplished, then curriculum becomes an issue again—curriculum not as a subject but as an approach to learning and using knowledge.

The rest of what I have to say concerns these issues—of acti-

[4] Jerome S. Bruner. *The Relevance of Education*. Anita Gil, editor. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971 © by Jerome S. Bruner.

vating a learner, of giving him his full sense of intent and initiative.

Consider first getting people to want to learn something, how to make the learning enterprise sustained and compelling. In a recent article in the *Saturday Review*, I proposed that it is possible to conceive of a Monday-Wednesday-Friday curriculum covering the standard topics, and a Tuesday-Thursday and indeed Saturday way of doing things in which immediate and compelling concerns are given the central place—activism? Let them on Tuesdays and Thursdays prepare "briefs" in behalf of their views, make a case for things they care about. Let them prepare plans of action, whether they be on issues in the school, on the local scene, or whatever. What is important is to learn to bring all one's resources to bear on something that matters to you now.

These are the times for the migratory questions that wander on long after their answers are forgotten, just because they are great questions. And there must be more time for the expressive elements—the encounters, the hates, the loves, the feelings. All this need not be antic nor need it all be in the manner of presenting one's case. I have seen experiments using improvisational theatre, drama, film, and the like, to teach and to question history, projects in which one learns to construe events through different sets of eyes. To what an extraordinary extent do films and plays of the contemporary scene matter in this! Ionesco or Pirandello are not so much concerned with absurdity but with how not to be caught with the obvious. This is not something to be prescribed. But it can surely be explored: how it is we are perplexed by the texture of the society in which we live.

An extraordinary, moving book called *Letter to a Teacher; Schoolboys of Barbiana* [5] is about a contemporary Tuscan hill town in Italy. The children there had failed so many times in so many ways in school that they had given up generation after generation—consigned to unskilled labor. A priest came to the parish. He started a school in which nobody was to fail, a school in which it was expected that everybody had to pass. It was everyone's responsibility to see that everybody in the class mastered the lesson before anybody could go on to the next lesson.

A community is a powerful force for effective learning. Students, when encouraged, are tremendously helpful to each other. They are like a cell, a revolutionary cell. It is the cell in which mutual learning and instruction can occur, a unit within a class-

[5] *Letter to a Teacher; Schoolboys of Barbiana.* Translated by Nora Rossi and Tom Cole. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970.

room with its own sense of compassion and responsibility for its members.

These were matters we did not do enough with at Woods Hole. We did not think about mutuality because we were stuck on the idea of curriculum—in spite of the fact that our laboratories and our very curriculum projects were set up rather like communes!

Inevitably, somebody will ask, "Well, how are you going to grade them?" You might also ask, "How in the world are you going to grade all of these distinguished colleagues who write collaborative articles among themselves and their graduate students?"

There is a group of high school girls in Concord, Massachusetts, who are tutoring in the local elementary school. Those who are acquainted with cross-age tutoring will know, as I discovered, the extent to which those who help are helped, that being a teacher makes one a better learner. But should it be such a surprise? Is this not what is meant by passing on the culture?

What we say of the peer group and the near-peer group holds for the different age levels within the society. For in some deep way, what is needed is the reestablishment of a "learning community" beyond formal school which, as now constituted, is far too isolating. This is not done just by removing the barriers between elementary and high school students or by establishing a lifetime relationship to one's college where one can return for sustenance and become part of a broader learning community again. Massachusetts Institute of Technology pronounced a few years ago that an engineer's education is obsolete after five years, so he must be brought back to bring him up to date. Let him come back, yes, but let the price of admission be that he discharge his obligation then to those who are just beginning—teacher, tutor, guide, other?

Finally I would like to explore, in the interest of relevance, whether we might not recapture something of the old notion of vocation, of ways of life, or—to use the expression of so many undergraduates today—of "life styles." I am impressed with contemporary concern for life styles. I have just finished a term as Master of Currier House, a Radcliffe-Harvard House, and I assure you of the genuineness of this concern. But I am appalled that it is rarely translated into what one *does* with a life style, the kind of vocation and livelihood in which we can express it.

Could it be that in our stratified and fragmented society, our students simply do not know about local grocers and their styles, local doctors and theirs, local taxi drivers and theirs, local political activists and theirs? And don't forget the styles of local bookies,

aspiring actresses, or unmarried mothers. No, I really believe that our young have become so isolated that they do *not* know the roles available in the society and the variety of styles in which they are played. I would urge that we find some way of connecting the diversity of the society to the phenomenon of school, to keep the latter from becoming so isolated and the former so suspicious.

Finally, let me add one last thing not directly connected with *The Process of Education,* but a problem of the first order today. One cannot ignore this problem in talking of education. We shall kill ourselves, as a society and as human beings, unless we direct our efforts to redressing the deep, deep wounds that we inflict on the poor, the outcast, those who somehow do not fit within our caste system—be they black, or dispossessed in any way. If there is one thing that has come out of our work with the very young, it is the extent to which "being out," not having a chance as an adult, or as a parent, very quickly reflects itself in loss of hope in the child. As early as the second or third year, a child begins to reflect this loss of hope.

When any group is robbed of its legitimate aspiration, its members will aspire desperately and by means that outrage the broader society, though the means are efforts to sustain or regain dignity. Inequity cannot be altered by education alone, another lesson we have learned in the past decade. The impact of poverty is usually transmitted through the school as well. Poverty cannot be counteracted by words unless there are also jobs and opportunities available to express society's confidence in what is possible after school.

There must be ways in which we can think honestly of reformulation of the institutions into which our schools, as one integral part, fit. Surely it requires that we redirect our resources, reorder our priorities, redefine our national effort, and come to terms with the fact that we have a deep and brutal racism in us—in all of us. We must learn how to cope with that. The young know this fact. They often despise our failure to talk about racism and our other difficulties. History may well side with them.

In the end, we must finally appreciate that education is not a neutral subject, nor is it an isolated subject. It is a deeply political issue in which we guarantee a future for someone; and, frequently, in guaranteeing a future for someone, we deal somebody else out. If I had my choice now, in terms of a curriculum project for the seventies, it would be to find the means whereby we could bring society back to its sense of values and priorities in life. I believe I would be quite satisfied to declare, if not a moratorium, then some-

thing of a de-emphasis on matters that have to do with the structure of history, the structure of physics, the nature of mathematical consistency, and deal with curriculum rather in the context of the problems that face us. We might better concern ourselves with how those problems can be solved, not just by practical action, but by putting knowledge, wherever we find it and in whatever form we find it, to work in these massive tasks. We might put vocation and intention back into the process of education, much more firmly than we had it there before.

A decade later, we realize that *The Process of Education* was the beginning of a revolution, and one cannot yet know how far it will go. Reform of curriculum is not enough. Reform of the school is probably not enough. The issue is one of man's capacity for creating a culture, society, and technology that not only feed him but keep him caring and belonging.

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And They of the Middle Years?

FRED T. WILHELMS

"And your young men shall see visions," says the Bible,
"And your old men shall dream dreams."

BUT we who gather in such a room as this are neither so old nor so young; we are of the years between. There may still linger about us some mistiness of the youthful apocalyptist, but normally one does not move into the circles of educational leadership until his dews have dried in the growing heat of the morning. Likewise, there may already be unfolding within us something of the evening dreamer, but in all my years in ASCD I have yet to find one of us who *only* dreams.

We are the genuine "now" generation. We stand in the time of action—of action and decision for action. It is not that we are so present-bound that we simply hoe our daily row without ever looking up to the hills. We deal heavily in futures; for ideas, ours are the procreative years, and some of our brain children are so daring that to the less expert and the less seasoned they only look like daydreams. But there is a difference; even our most visionary ideas show the color of plans of action. And we pick and choose among them realistically, always hunting for what most needs to be done—and for those ventures that by some stretching, tiptoe reach can just be brought off.

Our time of life is that of the architect, the inventor, and the engineer; the time of the facilitator, the organizer; the time of all those who seek out what must be done and get it done. For most of us, even the people we deal with—our faculties, our boards, our citizen constituencies—are also at this same do-it stage in the cycles of their lives. We're Saturday's children, who work for a

living. Some wag has said it another way: "The young and the old have the answers; those in between are stuck with the questions." For a few short years we stand at the center, the generation of the responsible, the people who can and who do, the for-real activists.

And so it is always a very good thing when people like us call time out for a few days, in a great conference, to figure out our agenda. What we and people like us decide has to go on that agenda may be the most important fact in the whole world of education. But the choices come hard. We always have to face the great questions: What has to be done? What can be done? And, out of it all, what are the next big jobs to tackle?

Each of us keeps doing his own flailing and winnowing, threshing out his own imperatives. In the following pages I should like to sketch my personal "Big Three": the three that meet the tests for me. They have to be done, they can be done, and they're the next big jobs to tackle.

1. Intellectual Potentiation

Back in my home country the farmers still tell a wry story that must have come out of the dry years of the 1890's. On advice of counsel but half-way against his own judgment, the aggravated farmer who hasn't had a decent crop in years goes out under the stars to pray. "This year, O Lord," he prays, "please let me raise some real corn—not any more of them *damn* nubbins!"

They don't raise many nubbins out there any more. Some, yes, because they don't know all the answers or control all the conditions. But they've put together a lot of things a lot of people have learned, and mostly they produce strong, tall stalks loaded with long, heavy ears. The crops that they routinely raise today would have been called absolutely impossible a quarter-century ago, if anyone had had the nerve to predict them.

When it comes to the kid crop, we're still raising an awful lot of nubbins that we don't have to. We don't know all the answers either, or control all the conditions, so maybe we can't get away from the aching problem altogether. But, at the least, the *size* of the nubbin crop is entirely unnecessary. We just have not put together what we know, and applied it.

And so, year after year, by the thousands, by the millions, we have a certain type of child coming to school. He looks and acts almost as if he *can't* learn to read, *can't* do the standard school

tasks. He can't talk well, either, or hear comprehendingly, if the language calls for the kind of precision that goes with a complex society and economy. Put it baldly: He seems unable to *think* with the clean edges on his thinking that go with a great technology. As the years go on he will probably fall even further behind. He may drop out, but even if he hangs on to graduate he will probably go out semi-literate, able to think or communicate about refined academic or technical matters only in coarse, gross terms.

There are many, many strands woven into that tragic story, including all too many contributed by the school itself. But the one factor that gets blamed the most—the brain the child was born with—is probably as innocent as a lamb. Practically everybody wants to believe that that is where the trouble lies, that that brain just wasn't good enough. And in all truth, I suppose, it may have been somewhat poorer, just as it may have been somewhat better, than an average baby brain. But almost surely, if that brain was not physically damaged in transit, it was good enough for those standard school tasks, *just because it was a human brain.* And that is true regardless of the color of the baby's skin or the part of town he was born in.

The real question is how that brain was nurtured and cultivated. (Please forgive me if I keep talking just in terms of the brain; charge it a little to metaphor; I know full well that the whole person is involved, but one can't say everything in one breath.) If it is valid to reason from experiments which have been done with animals and cannot be done with people—and I do not see why it isn't valid—then we can assume that the very anatomy and chemical supply of the brain the child was born with will have been affected, for better or for worse, by the quality of the child's life experiences. By analogy with animal experimentation, a rich quality of life experience may already have produced a heavier cortex, a richer supply of vital juices. Or a poverty of experience may have produced the opposite. Whether or not that is literally true of a human child as it is of animals, let it stand as metaphor of what may be the greatest option our society possesses.

I do not pretend that we can yet calibrate precisely how much growth we can produce or prescribe exactly how to do it. But I do know that we can sharpen sensory discrimination in every modality, and expand the sensory input that is effectively used. I am confident that a rich and varied—yet also *orderly*—pattern of stimulation is wonderfully productive of tonus and alertness as well as the ability to solve problems. I believe it reasonable to estimate that

language is the species-specific forté of the human being, and I believe we can greatly increase not only the richness and fluency of that language but also its potential for precision and for the complex burden-bearing demanded by our kind of life. I believe it is wholly possible to teach a more effective use of what Hilda Taba liked to call the "higher processes of thought." I am confident that we can put a child into a close relationship with a rich environment and lead him into reacting vividly to it. Just so, also, we can put him in touch with people and lead him into communicating actively with them.

In short, we have a wide margin of choice. We can choose whether our children shall come to us at school flaccid of mind, able to think and to communicate only in the grosser ways—or whether they shall be bright and chipper, alert, noticing, discriminating, reacting aggressively to wide ranges of stimuli, and so at home with a language of some precision that intellectual tasks such as reading will fall into place naturally.

I am deliberately staying away from using more grandiose terms such as creating intelligence or raising the IQ, though I think those terms not unjustified. Neither have I made any allusion to what may be expected from better diet, or from better health care, or from the newly developing drugs. I am saying as simply as I know how that even in the present state of our technical ability and even with the use of normal educational means alone, it is perfectly feasible to invigorate and equip the young learner so that the mild intellectual tasks of school will be pleasant and natural for him.

I suppose I am making this sound like purely an early-childhood business. I do not mean to. Undoubtedly attention to the early years will be the most profitable simply because natural growth in certain dimensions is normally so rapid in those years that to help it even a little is to reap great gains. But I consider it the ultimate absurdity to think of a child's "intelligence" as being virtually all formed at an age when, in Piaget's frame of reference, he has not yet even entered the stage of formal operations! Hilda Taba thought the sixth grade was a good place to be as she worked out her strategies for improving the use of the higher types of thinking, and—except for the loss of what could have been done in the antecedent years—I'd guess the twelfth grade would be a very good place to be, too.

The only answer is to start very early and do what is appropriate then, and then go on doing what is appropriate at every

succeeding stage. We need to start so early that we must depend heavily on parents to do the actual work; very well, then, we ought to be making a big investment in training parents to do it well; we could also be preparing the next wave of parents by hitching nursery schools and Operation Head Starts to our secondary schools, and having the adolescents get firsthand experience combined with theoretical instruction.

A little later, perhaps around the age of three, we probably need to depend on institutional assistance; all right, then, let's be building the institutions. We may not know yet exactly how they should look, as compared to a traditional nursery school or an Operation Head Start, but we can safely move ahead and learn as we go. Later still, in the years of "regular" schooling, what we need is curriculum and methodology that stimulate the ability and the disposition to learn. To secure those, in an institution that has so much of their opposites, will be much harder than building new preschool units. But I believe it is technically within our grasp to deliberately build ability to learn. I guess that the payoff will continue to be on sharpened sensory attentiveness, with active reaction, and on language and communication geared to the precision needs of school and industry; but I think that at the more advanced levels deliberate teaching of reasoning, of the ability to generalize and to use inferences from one situation to apply to another situation—such "higher processes" will become more important by the year.

I have deliberately kept my language a bit unfocused. I have wished to stay away from details and just keep confronting one wonderful fact: it *is possible* to potentiate the intellectual capacities of learners at so much higher a level than the one we are used to that we simply cannot conceive of the change it could make in a school. I think it is a modest prediction that at least in our more troubled schools we could soon have the lowest quartile of students handling schoolwork as well as the third-quartile students now do, and have our low-average group performing as well as our high-average group now does.

Of course, we do not yet have all the specifications of the institutions and programs we need. But we have reasonable evidence that we can raise the whole level of intellectual functioning significantly.

The quality of millions of lives is at stake. The job has to be done; it can be done; and I nominate it as one of the great next tasks to tackle.

2. Personal Potentiation

Those of you who know me may be surprised and—I almost hope—a little bothered that I have come this far sounding as if the brain existed independent of the whole personality, with all its surges of feeling and emotion. Now I suppose I'm in further danger of bothering you the other way round. I want to consider the possibilities of strengthening a young person *as a person.* And, in that, it is all too easy to sound as if it is to be done in the absence of the intellect. But, in each case, I really do know that what we arbitrarily separate as affect and cognition is one living fabric, and I can only plead that the way of the communicator is hard.

Let me put my thesis bluntly: I believe it is possible to "grow" within young people generally a strength and integrity of personality, a fineness and yet also a toughness of fiber, and a moral purpose and quality of character heretofore associated only with the outstanding few. I believe this is always a proper function of the schools. But now the multiple crises among our youth make it newly imperative, and our deepening insights and technical abilities make it newly feasible. Therefore, I propose that we set aside *whatever time and resources may be necessary and go directly at helping each young person in his personal becoming, no matter what happens in the process to some of our cherished subject matter or patterns of action.*

I know that *could* sound like just more of the same. Schools have always talked up the notion of forming young people into fine "citizens." Every teacher, I suppose, daydreams of himself as a great formative influence in the lives he touches. But we have mostly worked to a pitifully thin model—the model of the good little boy or girl—the model, really, of the sweetly reasonable conformist. And even to that meager goal we have given attention chiefly because it coincided with the maintenance of a quiet, orderly discipline. Rarely have we sat down to analyze what methodology would be productive—or even simply avoid being counterproductive—in the making of a person. And when it came to curriculum, well, you had better not interfere with my gerunds or my quadratic equations!

Maybe that is too negative. I put it that way deliberately to emphasize that I mean something entirely different. In the first place, there is no reason for us to remain stuck on a meager, copybook stereotype of goodness in human beings. We have had

Carl Rogers a good many years now, and Abraham Maslow and the others, with their striking new insights into human nature and potential. Over the centuries we have had Jesus and Plato and all the great poets and philosophers and religious geniuses, with their visions of what humanity and human life can be. We could be tapping our most sensitive social thinkers as to the real nature of the democratic citizenry we must have to survive. And it would not hurt us to listen thoughtfully to the lyrics of the songs our young people sing, to catch their dawning vision of what is significant.

I do not know how to put it strongly enough that our first job is to true up our image of what is possible and desirable in human quality. Educators forever want to take all that for granted. But, meanwhile, a whole new image is forming. It is technical and sophisticated, as the scientists put their discoveries together. At the same time it is moral and idealistic, as a new ethic emerges out of deep contemplation and study and a newly honored intuition. It is rich and infinitely varied, open to an enormous range of goodnesses. And, above all, it has a new validity because it has been come at so carefully, and it holds out a new hope because of the enormous potential it reveals. Once we all have a valid image of what a human being can become, we educators have a star to steer by.

Of course, to speak of "an image" is to risk sounding as if one wanted to conform everybody to some perfect type, as by some educational cloning. But that danger really comes from taking the image for granted, not from pondering it. For we can be sure that the deeper we go the more we shall cherish infinite variety and uniqueness. So, in that sense, let us assume that we have worked our way through to "an image," and raise the operational question: Can we, in fact, do much to move toward it?

Here I simply have no doubts whatever. We are technically able to build a curriculum—using that term in its deepest sense—that will be profoundly healthful. I have neither the time nor the competence to be very specific; but let me tick off just three great contributions we can feasibly make:

1. We can help a youngster toward insight into himself. We can help him to understand his less-conscious motivations and his impulse life, as Lawrence Kubie has urged us to do. In the process we can help him to accept and honor his feelings, as well as those of other people. Self-insight is a powerful force toward self-acceptance and the compassionate acceptance of others. And the person who can look at himself with clear eyes is well on the way to maturity.

2. We can help a youngster toward greater openness and sensitivity in his relations with others, and toward a responsible identity with the human condition. What is involved here ranges all the way from skills of hearing others and empathizing with them to the ability to give affection and accept it.

3. We can help a youngster to perceive many ways of looking at life, many styles of living it, and many systems of values by which to guide the living of it. At base, values are perceptions, and our young person needs a very rich range of perceptions of what is possible. But values get their ultimate meaning as commitments. Without exerting any pressure or control we can help each young person to hammer out his own personal set of perceptions to live by and to form commitments tough enough to stand the acids of our times.

Obviously, these are only a few generic types out of a host of possible specifics. But I shall not be apologetic about them. They are basic. *If done, they would produce tremendous results; and they are all perfectly do-able.* As a matter of fact, they are rather easy. (Not easy institutionally, of course; we lack the tradition, the cadres of trained teachers, and all that. But, intrinsically—given a reasonable background of teacher education and curriculum development—none of them is impracticable or even particularly difficult.)

That is to say, if we decide to do the job we can do it. We can do a great deal of it with the subject matter we already teach, or stuff very much like it. For example, some of the new science programs, if taught in the spirit in which they were written, must have a wonderful effect on a student's ability to tolerate ambiguity, which is one of the more important foundation stones of a healthy personality. Inspiring new social studies materials are coming along on which a youngster can hone his sense of social values.

Still, of all the subject matter we use, this is the area where the humanities are king. Literature, music, and all the arts—these are the great resources when insight into human nature and life is at stake. They are the great medium for discourse in the realm of values. In this age of the behavioral sciences they should not have to stand by themselves, for if Shakespeare was a great psychologist so was Sigmund Freud. Psychology could be used as a powerful discipline far down in the grades, and so could anthropology.

I wish I had time to expand on this. Obviously I cannot be pinning such great hopes on the all-too-common technical dissection of a few literary "classics." I hope you do not think my idea of using

psychology is to teach it for its own sake, as a science. But if we really tried—and, fortunately, inspired little groups *are* trying—we could put together programs, not to "teach literature" or to "teach art" or to "teach psychology," but to *use* these great resources to help youngsters find themselves and dig into the eternal problems of life.

We mustn't underestimate the radicalness of all this. It will call for a new kind of teaching—of non-teaching, almost. It will have very little in common with our typical academic exercises. The great peaks of human experience don't lie on that line. It will have to be leisurely and tranquil. It will depend on a transparent genuineness and openness. We shall have to hunt everywhere for the art and the literature that speak authentically to today's youth, from the suburb or the ghetto. Then we shall need to stay out of their road, as they do their great work. The methods we have generally used *kill* the arts in all too many cases. The greatest challenge I can imagine is to devise a methodology that fits them.

And traditional subject matter will likely not be enough. I know that the very mention of "sensitivity training" turns a lot of people off, and I have my own reservations about some of its present forms. But I believe, underneath the surface phenomena of "encounter groups," Esalen, and all that, something very fundamental is emerging. I predict that we shall soon be able by a long, slow, gentle, unobtrusive process to help young people into such an openness and sensitivity of relationships as we ourselves have almost never known. In that sense, I believe that sensitivity training must become a bedrock part of the humanities.

But I think we shall be wrong if we visualize the humanistic approach too much in terms of books or music or even theory. We shall have to reach out also to direct, earthy experience. When our adolescents become a major resource in the staffing of homes for the aging, compassion will grow a new meaning. When they start doing most of the work in Operation Head Start, their insight into human motivation will be a fresh one.

But I did not mean to be even this prescriptive as to the methods of growing stronger and finer personalities. I've just wanted to say with some credibility that it can be done if we choose to do it.

I hope we shall so choose. I do not know how you perceive these times of ours, but I believe we stand at one of the great swing-points of human history. Old institutions are crumbling, old certainties are going gray. A century ago Matthew Arnold was already saying:

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full . . .
. . . . . .
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the
vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

The tide that he detected then has gone all the way out now, to expose the last noisome mud flat of our technology.

It is not a matter of religious faith alone. We are all shaken up—our young people only more visibly than the rest of us.

It is a tormenting time to be growing up. Our youth are haunted—the ablest, most sensitive ones especially so—by the gray shadow of a mushroom cloud, by the specter of a population gone lemming, by the depletion of Earth's riches we have depended on, and by the befouling of all the places where we live. They are put off by what they see as our meager, materialistic approach to life; they are outraged by a sleazy war. With a good bit of courage they are groping and hoping for something better, often grasping at ridiculous straws, getting themselves into all manner of bizarre postures. And the worst of it all is that they may be losing heart and retreating once more into the cool of quietism.

I think we had better not sit by and force upon them an unaided Children's Crusade, making them find and create that better new world all by themselves. It is our struggle, too, you know. We do not have the eyes, either, to penetrate the future, or the brains to write a program for it. If we genuinely throw ourselves into the struggle we may wind up looking pretty bizarre now and then, ourselves. But we do have resources and some maturity and some systems of attack. It is possible for us to help these young people realize their potential. It can be done. Their lives are at stake. And I nominate the building of a broad-scope program as one of the next jobs to do.

3. Societal Survival

Finally—and I shall be brief about this—I call for a radical reformulation of what we do to produce citizens.

Once again, I do not know how you size up our situation, but my diagnosis is that we are in a very tight spot. America is in a tight spot. The world is in a tight spot. The issue is very close to one of bare survival, and that issue is in doubt.

There are awful threats here on our planet. The big bomb. And, even bigger, the population bomb. When I was a consultant in Pakistan, a dozen years ago, we commonly guessed that mass starvation would arrive between 1980 and 1985. The green revolution seems to have postponed that now, but *only* to have postponed it. It is too late now to stop the coming of the day that will reduce the starvation in Biafra to a casual incident. And we shall be helpless spectators of doom. Probably we can still prevent anything like that in this rich land of ours, if we choose to hold all our resources just for ourselves—and *if* we can. But what that will do to our souls, God only knows. Already the barely repressed awareness of what is to come is etching itself into all our being.

Meanwhile, the future livability of this earth which is our home is more and more in doubt. It is hard now to remember the happy magic of DDT in the years of World War II; for it is taking the shape of one of man's great disasters. It is hard to remember that a generation ago a few hundred million of us in the brightly lit technologies of the West looked to be the bringers of a wonderful new level of life to all mankind; now one must soberly wonder whether we shall not turn out to have been a great scourge. A handful of the world's people, living across a fingerspan of man's history, we have used up resources beyond belief and we have fouled the earth with our leavings. One after another, our bright successes turn to ashes in our mouth. To our consternation, our mercury refuses to remain buried, and the poisons we have concocted threaten to break out of their concrete coffins.

It is the time of the steep curves. Name almost any problem you wish to: the rot at the center of our cities, the pollution of air and water, the strife between group and group, the depletion of essential resources, the ability to overcrowd the world with people and the ability to kill the people—these have all been with us before. But suddenly, on every chart in the world, the curves are rising, ever more sharply—and they all seem to be headed at the year 2000. The problems share two grim imperatives: (a) They have to be solved *or else*. (b) They have to be solved SOON *or else*. And only a massive, total effort by dedicated, effective citizens has any hope of pulling us out.

I do not believe we are now producing a citizenry adequate to that job. Thinking especially of the social studies, I think we are fiddling with academic niceties while the world burns. Therefore, as to the social studies, I offer just one criterion. *They ought to be devoted completely to helping this nation and the world solve the*

crucial social problems of our time. Of course, that means jettisoning the traditional fact-mongering about pilgrims and presidents. If we ever could afford that schoolmarmish sterility, we can't now. That's obvious. But I have to reject also that academically precious formulation of the early 1960's with its emphasis on the structure of the disciplines, "thinking like a historian," and all that. I do not quarrel with it technically if content is the goal. There are a lot of nice by-products on that trail, and I hope we can salvage them. But that whole line of thinking puts a premium on subject matter which I can no longer support. What we need now, in this crisis, is a guttier thing, for which the measuring stick is not academic accomplishment. The simple question is: What will most help the youngsters we teach, right now and through the years of their lives, to make the greatest contribution to working on the real agenda of their day?

The answers to that question can't be simple, and without a great deal of experimentation we can't be sure what they are. But I'd like to offer a few suggestions:

1. We had better start allocating major blocks of time to the items of that real agenda. If population and pollution are salient problems ahead of us, then let's make them centers of study and work. I don't know what proportion of the total time in the social studies can profitably be spent this way, in direct attack on current problems. But I am sure that such problems should have whatever time they can use well—no matter how much that may cut back time on some of the traditional academic content.

2. We have to develop a social laboratory in school and community. We have to get beyond reading about, talking about; we have to involve real action on real problems.

3. We have to analyze the elements that contribute to effective citizenship and learn to cultivate them. Almost surely that will require long, careful attention to process and to the dynamics of groups. Almost surely it will mean concentrating heavily upon the affective side. Once again, I suspect that we shall develop a very superior, lasting form of that crude thing we now call sensitivity training. But there is more to effective citizenship than sensitive process, and we need to know what makes it tick.

4. The whole enterprise must be conducted in a climate of responsible freedom and rugged independence. It is a gross anomaly to try to produce autonomous, free-swinging citizens in the traditional classroom conditions of control and dependency. For far too long we have violated the very organism of vigorous, idealistic young men and women by fencing them up in tiger cages of economic and civic dependency. It is time we let them stand up and get into the act, helping to figure out

what ought to be done, helping to do it. It's not a matter of being nice to the kids. We need them.

Well, there you have my personal Big Three: the next big jobs to tackle because they have to be done and because by some stretching, tiptoe reach they can just be brought off. I haven't asked what should "be in" the curriculum, because the real question is what the curriculum should *do*. I haven't asked that old, low-level question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" because the real question is more like, "What personal and societal developments are of most worth?"

Out of that hard questioning, the jobs I bring back to you are not for the soft and dreamy. They can all be done, but only by seasoned campaigners who combine the ultimate in professional skill and sophistication with the last measure of devotion. I would not have spoken as I have today if I did not know that you embody just that combination. You are the generation of the responsible; and, when all the talking is finished, you are the activists who are for real.

JOHN D. GREENE, Director of Instruction, Baton Rouge Public Schools, Louisiana, and President, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1970-71

Impressions

FELLOW ASCD MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

From its beginning ASCD has been composed of people who care. The extent of the involvement of the people who have planned this 1971 Conference and of the men and women who are participating in it makes it unmistakably clear that we are a viable organization and that our members are individuals who not only dare to care but also dare to act. We know that involvement and action not only spring from but also contribute to personal fulfillment, so your association and mine maintains a deep and perennial concern for the process of human becoming—or as we perhaps might better phrase it, becoming human. I am confident that the activities, the relationships, the intellectual and attitudinal content of this program will contribute notably to the human-becoming of each of us who participates, but in the end I know we all hope that our Conference experiences will help us to further humanize our classrooms and all of our contacts with young people. Conferences alone are not enough; the "payoff," the ultimate evaluation is decided by what we do every day in our local settings.

Responses from the sessions here in St. Louis have been very positive. I am especially pleased to find out that several of the groups are planning to continue their team-work relationships in the coming months and expect to get together again at the 1972 Conference in Philadelphia. I know that the Executive Council and the Conference Planning Committee are already taking steps to increase still further the number of opportunities for member participation in our meeting next year.

We are continuing our search for opportunities to increase the participation of ASCD members at other times than at Conferences. We shall, for example, need advice from many people as we continue the current effort to define Association priorities, an effort

which the Executive Council and Board of Directors have already initiated. The entire membership will shortly be asked to indicate its position on a number of resolutions introduced at this Conference but which can become official ASCD policy statements only if approved by a majority of our total membership. And we already have evidence that the Review Council, a relative newcomer to our administrative structure, is going to be of much assistance as it goes about its task of reviewing, assessing, and recommending.

After watching ASCDers cope with the strike situation last year in San Francisco, I decided that the CQ (coping quotient) of our members must be high. Seeing you cope with the somewhat troublesome transportation and meeting-room situation here confirms that judgment. It has been my observation that a characteristic trait of ASCD members is to give it to the Association's president straight when things don't go the way they ought to, so that I think I am safe in saying that the overall reactions to our Conference have been positive. In his turn I think the president has an obligation to give it straight: this has been a fine Conference because *you* have made it so, and this has been one of the greatest years in my professional career, again because *you* have made it so. You see before you a grateful and happy man. Thank you.

JOHN D. GREENE, *President 1970-71*
Association for Supervision
and Curriculum Development

ALVIN D. LOVING, SR., Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and President, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971-72

The Concept of Avoidance

WE IN education are so caught up in the sociopolitical arena that we can no longer afford to avoid involvement. There are many social problems facing American education today. Children's learning will be affected as long as it will take us to solve these problems. Let me just mention a few of these problems.

First, there is the desegregation bag. This one is fraught with deep emotion. Since the Supreme Court decision of 1954, we have lived through much hatred and much heartache. Two words previously little known except in the halls of justice are now on the tongues of most Americans, *de facto* and *de jure*. The cry for local control and "a piece of the action" has brought the local community in direct conflict with the politics of the state. The state is saying that the answer to the people's problem is decentralization, and the people are saying there is no substitute for local control.

The second problem we face is with our leadership. People in high places are playing games with themselves and their constituents. This is true of government, of education, of religion. This problem gives rise to another. Some call it a rebellion of the taxpayers. Others see it as a threat to the concept of free public education. No matter how one sees it, it still remains that the support of our schools is for many Americans a low priority item.

And finally, there is disunity within the total educational profession. We have become fragmented. We in leadership roles have become afraid of losing power. The right to make decisions, we maintain, is our right, and we are not yet ready to share this responsibility.

I would like to feel that we in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development are functioning on the cutting edge of these problems. We were among the first to give consideration to modifiability, to accountability, and to relevance. You may re-

member that these were the basic concepts that we emphasized in the program, "The Generation of New Understandings: A Program of Study and Action." You must also remember that last year we began to emphasize "The Quality of Life and Society in the United States," recognizing that all the skills and techniques of supervision and curriculum development are for naught if they do not assist in developing a better quality for living.

I think we in education, and in ASCD particularly, must take the next step. We must develop a new perspective. This new perspective must be one of critical self-analysis. We may be guilty of action of which we are not aware. Let me give you an example. I was at the ASCD headquarters in Washington, three or four weeks before this conference. While there, I was reminded of what it was that brought us to the theme of this conference, "Dare To Care/ Dare To Act." I reflected back on Atlantic City, and Chicago, and San Francisco.

The 1971 Conference Planning Committee for St. Louis, meeting the previous year in San Francisco, asked and was granted permission to devote a portion of the St. Louis Conference to studying ways of combating racism. It was difficult to get teams to man action laboratories in this area. Finally, the Planning Committee was able to pull together four teams. Remembering all this, I asked last month to see the advance registrations for the St. Louis Conference. I discovered that the four labs had been reduced to three. I also noticed, as we went through the advance registrations, that curriculum skills and techniques, and topics of this nature, had more than 200 pre-conference registrants. Areas dealing with racism, with multi-ethnic curriculum, or with the things that are so necessary for us to look at on the American scene today, had 20 to 25 to 30 pre-conference registrants.

It was then that I developed in my mind the "concept of avoidance." It occurred to me that by choice people avoided those things that would cause them a bit of annoyance, things that would cause them to look inside themselves. Let me give you another example. Saturday night at the opening session, Dr. Price Cobbs, the noted black psychiatrist who co-authored the book *Black Rage*, did what only Price Cobbs could do. I am sure that what he said annoyed some of our members.

Sunday morning, the Conference newspaper announced that Dr. Uvaldo Palomares would be substituting for the general session on Sunday night. Dr. Palomares, it was announced, was a Mexican American, a Chicano, a former migrant worker whose parents had

been migrant workers. The article also stated that Dr. Palomares was going to speak on some aspect of racism. By Sunday night's general session, we had registered 2,000 more people than we had registered the day before. Yet for Dr. Palomares, there were 2,000 fewer people in Kiel Auditorium than there were the night before, for Dr. Cobbs. I am sure there were circumstances other than avoidance that kept people away, but not in such droves. If I am being unkind, I do not mean to be. I am simply saying that a bit of self-analysis should help us in ASCD to overcome these matters.

I would like to see members of ASCD dedicate ourselves to give at least 50 percent of our Conference time to the area dealing with human relations and the other 50 percent to the area of professional enrichment. I would like to see us gradually reduce the amount of time we give to the area of human relations as we improve in this area. Hopefully, when we reach the year 2000, good human relations would be a way of life.

The decade of the seventies represents our greatest challenge. These should be the tooling-up years for the eighties and nineties when, they tell us, more than 50 percent of all Americans will be of school age and in school. The schools, therefore, are morally committed to help build into America's children sound values that will assure acceptance and support of the ideals of democracy.

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